

APPENDIX E: EXPLORATION OF ELEMENTS

The following pages contain summaries and maps of the three small groups that participated in the Exploration of Elements exercise. Five elements were explored: Image and Character; Parks and Open Space; Transportation; Land Use; and, Residential. One group focused on Image/Character and Parks/Open Space, another focused on transportation, and a third focused on Land Use and Residential. There is no map for the Land Use and Residential group.

Image/Character and Parks/Open Space

Overview by Resource People

- **Tim Cox and Craig Larsen, City of Redmond Parks Department; Hank Margeson, Redmond Parks Board:**
 - Parks standard: 10 acres of parks or open space per 1,000 population
 - Variety is important: smaller parks do allow for walkability; larger parks work well, allowing efficient maintenance; public spaces, not necessarily green-space, provide enrichment
- **Jon Spangler and Peter Holte, City of Redmond Natural Resources Division:**
 - Very little water-quality treatment in Overlake: surface water flows to Kelsey Creek without treatment; few trees in shopping area contribute to high water temperatures
 - One possibility for treatment of surface water in Overlake is combining ponds and wetlands with parks
 - New and alternative stormwater services: vegetated roofs that serve as green space; bioretention swales/cells (rain gardens); permeable pavements

- **Kim van Ekstrom, City of Redmond Communications and Community Initiatives, spoke on image and character:**
 - 3 aspects to creating neighborhood magnets: function – what do you want; features – what do you need; and, focus – how to market and to whom
 - Let people know what you have, where you are, how to get here and there; Overlake's strong points are diversity and access/transit network
- **Chris Hoffman, Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce:**
 - Successful businesses need: good business structure; multiple uses in one place; way for customers to meet multiple needs in one place; good design
 - Things to consider in Overlake: ethnic mix/diversity; high capacity transit (HCT) between Overlake and Downtown Redmond; access/egress opportunities along corridors; helping businesses stay viable as redevelopment occurs; connections to multi-purpose, public and private trail systems (including 520 bike trail); safe connections along 148th Avenue NE; and, access to streams or protected areas
 - Need to work on getting people from Microsoft area to Overlake "center" and connecting the high school to this area as well

Group Discussion on Parks/Open Space

- Need area to be more walkable; create a network of green streets
 - Green streets should be 15-20' wide, with a specific pavement style, bollards, plantings, multi-seasonal shelters; should also create a barrier or space between pedestrians and cars
 - Green streets should include 152nd Avenue NE, NE 24th and NE 20th Streets, and 148th Avenue NE
 - Green streets could also help with stormwater treatment
 - Must ensure connectivity to the neighborhood; provide an aesthetic link for people

- The Group Health site presents an opportunity for both housing and a community center
 - An event space needs to consider parking concerns and how to provide access to transit and on-street parking
- Placement of plazas and parks: many, smaller parks or plazas; include a variety; consider corridor placement
- A park could be small but green; may consider use of design specialists for parks and plazas
- The Bel-Red slope presents an opportunity for views and green space; this space could be used as a stepping stone to get to other open or green spaces
- Parking structures or other buildings could have green roofs
- Issues: concern of creating privately-oriented public space or the perception of privately-oriented public space; safety issues with larger parks

Group Discussion on Image & Character

- Overlake currently characterized by diversity and variety; focus more on this cultural aspect
- Right next to Microsoft, a forward-looking neighborhood
- Overlake is perceived as an area containing both Redmond and Bellevue; almost like an extra city; suggests melding the views of 2 downtowns
- Need beautification while retaining what is already here
- Could pursue image similar to University Village
- Highlight what there is to walk to
- What is the role of business?

Overall Issues

- Things to consider: traffic, “cool” services, night-time business, residential
- Want to create the place where “everything” happens, comes from

- Concepts: modern urban campus of Microsoft; a village built around a public square (Overlake Village)
 - A missing niche: wi-fi or a technical center/space
- Need to include a place for Overlake residents to go in the evening; could be a cultural and/or performance center (such a center could be put in the Downtown with a smaller venue or other amenities in Overlake)
 - Try to capture the population that now goes to Seattle for arts and culture
 - Can think outside of the box: ice skating rink, dancing?
 - A covered outdoor space might provide opportunities for winter holiday celebrations (like Whistler in the Winter?)
- Should consider the borders as well since the area functions and shares many features with Bellevue
- Include higher-end residential that supports diversity
- Gateways (see map); identify gateways with techniques such as banners (on light posts), pillars, public art, way finding
- Uniform street plan/streetscape throughout neighborhood
- Arts in the Parks – for both Bellevue and Redmond: both lunch and evening activities
- Public Art: for culture and ambience, could include fountains
- Consider vertical spaces
- Other issues:
 - Economics do drive plans
 - Create incentives to help neighborhood “happen”
 - City should set the standards: should require developments to include amenity spaces, should implement aggressive program to save trees or plant new ones
 - Light rail will help connect to Seattle culture; should also incorporate other public options for personal transportation (including Flex cars, bikes)
 - Consider commercial mix similar to Renton, with character of University Village, but that also considers

diversity of incomes and that retains Uwajimaya and Sears

Land Use and Residential Development

■ What brings you to Overlake?

- Currently: diversity of choices, authentic ethnic restaurants, mom and pop shops, distinctive character, the fact that it serves multiple functions as well as multiple residential neighborhoods
- In the future, unique opportunities could attract people like Pacific Street in Tacoma which has museum and shops

■ What retail/businesses should be in Overlake? What specific uses should be here?

- Housing
- Retail, including local/mom and pop shops, as well as professional and medical services
 - Professional/residential services: dry cleaners, bakery, coffee shops...variety
 - Pricing competition – spectrum of prices: discount to high end
 - Destination or neighborhood-serving? Residents could support services; important point is that the area can do BOTH, allow for flexibility of either (similarities to Hillsboro, OR: “Intel Country”); keep difficulties of downtown Kirkland in mind: despite walkable environment, are having a hard time keeping some of the destination retail in business; San Jose also provides an example of mixed uses
 - Be sure to integrate residential and retail
 - Distribution
 - Auto service
 - No big box in core?
 - No drive-throughs? However, these are important to financial services
- Entertainment
- Cultural arts/museum/gallery

- Civic uses: library, community center
- Office
- Hotel/lodging
- Parks
- Transit/transportation function
- Overall better function: sense of place/destination rather than pass-through
- Things change over time/economic conditions, so there is a need to be flexible
- Will retail control what the neighborhood is?
Residential is more permanent and is more likely to drive retail; other community/public amenities such as transit might influence retail
- Make it distinct from Redmond Town Center or Bellevue Square

■ What would make you live in the Overlake Center?

- Housing that appeals to intergenerational groups and is affordable
- Sense of community
- Cleanliness and attractiveness
- Convenience and accessibility
- Transportation choices
- Safety
- Parking
- Religious facilities
- Quality schools/education
- Some open space in the area and in adjacent areas – HS, MS, etc.; open/recreation spaces in the area that children could enjoy while parents are shopping; social gathering places for adults as well
- Other amenities, such as water features like in Portland's Pearl District

■ What detracts from living here?

- Traffic
- Noise

- “Sea of parking” but also not enough parking for customers; look at shared parking?
- Limited street grid – poor circulation; parking lots not integrated/connected; look at roundabouts (these have worked in Carmel, Indiana)
- No critical mass yet
- Vision is not promoted: first developers will be pioneers

■ Other Issues:

- Who pays for amenities? These must be economically feasible; could allow developers to go up more floors
- Question of where big-box retail can go: should be precise about it’s placement; need anchors; consider multi-story models
- Should we distinguish Redmond from Bellevue?
Should focus on finding synergies and working on collaboration
- Should consider Downtown Redmond when thinking about housing and retail: if 152nd Avenue does have HCT, the housing feasibility increases; retail and housing depends on zoning capacity
- Focal area concepts: need to find ways to manage traffic while helping cars stop to shop or use services; should it be transit based?
 - Could be located in southern portion
 - Robson Street in Vancouver BC is an example

Transportation

Overview by Resource People

- **Joel Pfundt, City of Redmond Public Works - Transportation**
 - Adopted Transportation Master Plan in November, 2005
 - Priorities: public safety; maintain system; improve with growth; support centers; focus on cars, bikes, and pedestrians; connectivity; plan for HCT; support land-use vision (small town feel, green city)
 - Includes focus on parking management

- **Leonard McGhee, Sound Transit**
 - Sound Transit Phase 2: bringing HCT to the Eastside; will have vote with RTID November 2007
 - Currently studying corridors and will make a mode decision soon
 - Overlake Transit Center (NE 40th Street) is a likely station
- **Kevin O'Neill, City of Bellevue Planning and Community Development**
 - Much Downtown work
 - Bel-Red sub-area plan is being updated, focus on more than just transportation
 - HCT alignments and stations under discussion
- **Terry Marpert, City of Redmond Planning and Community Development update on King County Metro Transit**
 - Provide local, intercity, and express routes; have improved service over the last 5-10 years, including the 545 route
 - Proposed service changes include eliminating less productive routes such as 291 and 249; could increase frequency of others, such as 545
 - Return frequency from Seattle poor
 - How much additional demand exists?
- **Mag-Lev and Personal Rapid Transit (PRT)**
 - Light and small vehicles; 3' guideway; network system; "last mile" solution

Road Issues

- Use of Overlake Transit Center
- Recognize Downtown Redmond as a destination
- Overlake is a "go-through" area that handles lots of traffic; needs to be able to keep doing this; arterial through-put is important
- NE 24th Street to 152nd Avenue NE left turn backs up in the AM

- NE 24th Street to Bel-Red Road left turn is also bad, but not as poor as the above
- BROTS meant to improve flow at intersections
- New NE 36th Street overcrossing at SR 520 is planned

Transit Issues

- How are state dollars allocated? Exact numbers are not known; Metro redeploys hours locally where ST takes over express service
- Service changes are considered by a sounding board
- Transit is used mostly by commuters; it isn't likely to replace the car but can improve flow for those working or living in the area
- Need a better local road network to serve transit and local traffic
- Should retain inter-neighborhood routes, e.g. 253 and coordinate existing service
- A transit node serving local input, output that serves new and existing residents

High Capacity Transit (HCT) Discussion

- What about a 520 route that goes from Downtown Seattle to UW to Overlake? This is in Sound Transit's long range plan
- What does HCT do for Overlake at a local level? Need a local transit alternative? What do we want?
- What's the "last mile" solution (from HCT to actual destination)? Could be PRT on 156th Avenue NE between Overlake Transit Center (NE 40th Street) and Overlake Park and Ride; could do a rectangle around Overlake; Is there enough density for circulator?; Is walking a realistic option?
- Make area nice enough so you don't have to get out of car

Walking, Biking, Non-Motorized Discussion

- Need to connect pedestrian corridors (on- and off-street path network); upgrades should occur as development occurs

- 152nd Avenue NE is not the friendliest pedestrian environment
- Environment would improve by keeping through traffic out of neighborhood core
- Need to deal with driveways and their impacts
- Improve bike facilities from trail to local businesses

Summary

- Maintain arterial capacity
- Maintain local bus service
- Link Overlake Transit Center and Overlake neighborhood
- Improve internal circulation via local road network
- Provide a connection to the existing bike trails







